

LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

A Private School Experience



in a Public School Setting

Dear parents and staff,

As a follow up to my email from last evening, I am writing to further clarify the situation specific to potable water on our main campus.

The decision to shut off well #7 and provide alternative water sources pending receipt of additional test results was one that was made out of an abundance of caution and not out of a requirement based on any drinking water standard. While not impossible, based on the distance from the suspected contaminant plume, the direction of groundwater flow, the relative depths of the wells (well #7 is 605 feet deep), the location of our potable water wells, and the relatively short time period that has elapsed, the probability that these chemicals are from the August oil spill is extremely low if not nonexistent.

DEEP regulations require notification of Significant Environmental Hazards when "*polluted groundwater [is] 500 feet upgradient of or within 200 feet in any direction of a drinking water supply well with pollution detected above the groundwater protection criteria.*" Our closest potable water well (well #5) is 653' upgradient (meaning not in the direction of groundwater flow) from the LOLMS boiler room and is even further from the monitoring well that showed detection of extractable total petroleum hydrocarbons in groundwater. Potable water well #7 is even further away as it is 1,002' upgradient from the boiler room. It is much more likely that the PAH's found in well #7 come from a different source which we are working to identify.

As noted in my communication to families and staff last evening, the decision to prohibit the use of potable water for ingestion was solely precautionary as there are no drinking water standards for PAH's in Connecticut. The exceedances that were discovered were compared to the GWPC (Ground Water Protection Criteria) from DEEP. These criteria are used to measure groundwater in areas of the state where such water may be used for consumption after a possible contamination. Otherwise, these criteria are not normally used to evaluate drinking water which is why we had never tested for them prior.

It is also important to differentiate between a well test that is done at the source point versus one that is done at the entry point. As a public water supplier our required well testing is completed quarterly at the entry point (from sinks, water fountains, and other locations that directly service the schools) and is a test of the potable water that is drawn from our holding tank. The holding tank is fed from four wells, which results in dilution of the potable water from each well. In addition, our potable water is also fed through a chlorinating and PH adjusting system before being piped to sinks, water fountains, toilets, etc. The test that caused us to take action last evening was from the source point, which means the water was tested directly from the well. The water tested had not been diluted by the other wells, nor had it been through our chlorinating or PH adjusting system.

Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools

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While we do not have any reason to believe that students or staff are in any danger as a result of this situation, none of this should be interpreted to mean that we will ignore or dismiss this detection. We will continue to take regular tests and any other necessary action to ensure the safety of our students, staff, and neighbors under the guidance of DEEP, DPH, and the licensed environmental professional with whom we have contracted. As many of our families have relative work experience in this area, and in the interest of transparency, I have included for your review the most recent [test results](#) that initiated our response and actions reported to you last evening.

Sincerely,

Ian Neviaser
Superintendent of Schools

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